

# BAM 2019 Winter/Spring Season

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## **BAM presents 2019 DanceAfrica Festival**

**The nation's largest African dance festival and BAM's longest-running program celebrates Rwanda through traditional and contemporary lenses, featuring Inganzo Ngari on the Howard Gilman Opera House stage, May 24—27**

**The first DanceAfrica Portal connects New York and Kigali**

**Free, annual community events, including the Tribute to the Ancestors, Community Day, and DanceAfrica Bazaar, return with new programs including a Rwandan book event**

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor

### **DanceAfrica 2019**

#### ***Rwanda Reborn: The Remix***

Artistic Director Abdel R. Salaam

Inganzo Ngari

BAM/Restoration Dance Youth Ensemble (Brooklyn)

DanceAfrica Spirit Walkers

Music composed by Michael Wimberly

Lighting & Scenic Design by Al Crawford

Sound Design by David Margolin Lawson

### **BAM Howard Gilman Opera House (30 Lafayette Ave)**

May 24 at 7:30pm; May 25 at 2pm & 7pm; May 26 & 27 at 3pm

Tickets start at \$25

**Apr 17, 2019/Brooklyn, NY**—DanceAfrica—BAM's longest running program and one of its most beloved—returns for the 42nd year with a focus on Rwanda. The festival features one of Rwanda's best internationally-known dance companies, Inganzo Ngari, and several related programs to illuminate a country that moved past a national humanitarian disaster with collective determination.

BAM COMMUNICATIONS  
718.636.4129  
PRESS@BAM.ORG  
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BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING  
30 LAFAYETTE AVENUE  
BROOKLYN, NY 11217-1486

Twenty-five years after the Genocide, during which up to one million people—estimated to comprise 70% of the Tutsi population—were decimated, Rwanda has rebounded with a robust economy (annual GDP growth over 6% in the past five years) and a society determined to move towards reconciliation and renewal. “When we visited Rwanda,” DanceAfrica Artistic Director **Abdel R. Salaam** said, “everywhere we went, Rwandans no longer divided themselves as Hutus, Tutsis, or Twas. They are just Rwandans.” **Inganzo Ngari** is an example of it. Founded in 2006 with a focus on passing Rwandan folkloric dance and music to the next generation, the company has become an ambassador of Rwandan culture internationally and is making its US debut at BAM. They will perform some of the most recognizable Rwandan dances, including the warrior dance *Intore*, and collaborate with **BAM/Restoration Dance Youth Ensemble** on stage.

To reflect the contemporary Rwanda, several new elements have been created. They include spoken words performed by actor and poet **Malaika Uwamahoro** as part of the Opera House show, an interactive “DanceAfrica Portal” to Kigali, and a RadioBook Rwanda reading and discussion. A visual art exhibition and *FilmAfrica* with several contemporary Rwandan films round out DanceAfrica once again. More information below.

Many long-held traditions return, including the Tribute to Ancestors, the Community Day, the Outdoor Bazaar, and the late night dance party, all free to the public. More information below.

**For press information, contact David Hsieh at [dhsieh@BAM.org](mailto:dhsieh@BAM.org) or 718.724.8027.**

### **DanceAfrica Community events**

**A Tribute to the Ancestors** ceremony will be held at 10am on Sat May 18 at the Weeksville Heritage Center (158 Buffalo Ave). This traditional ceremony, which includes dancing and music by participating artists, is an integral part of DanceAfrica that honors elders who have passed. The event is free and open to the public.

It will be followed by the **DanceAfrica Community Day** at Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Plaza (1368 Fulton St) at 1pm to kick off the annual festival. It features performances by students from RestorationART.

The 2019 recipients of the **Samuel H. Scripps BAM Scholarship** for post-secondary education will be awarded on the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House stage on May 24. Inspired by the spirit of DanceAfrica, BAM Trustee Richard Feldman launched the Samuel H. Scripps BAM Scholarship Fund in 2008 in memory of former BAM Trustee and arts patron Samuel Scripps. The scholarships exclusively benefit students who have participated in BAM’s arts education programs.

**Jeffery Page**, the fourth Chuck Davis Emerging Choreographer Fellow, will also be feted at the May 24 performance. Created to honor Baba Chuck Davis, founder of DanceAfrica, this unique Fellowship offers dance practitioners the chance to travel to Africa and study with masters of African dance.

Last year’s fellow **Jade Charon** will present her study on the Kony and N’Dep dance styles of Senegal and Burkina Faso in a workshop (BAM Fisher Hillman Studio, May 18 at 3pm) and a Showing, followed by a talk-back (BAM Fisher Fishman Space, May 19 at 7pm). Both are free with RSVP.

### **About the Artists**

**Abdel R. Salaam** is the executive artistic director/co-founder of Forces of Nature Dance Theatre (FONDT) founded in 1981. Born in Harlem, NY, Salaam is a critically acclaimed choreographer and served as a dancer, teacher, and performing artist on five continents throughout his 47-year career in the dance world. He has received numerous awards and fellowships for excellence in dance including from the National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation on the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, New York State Council for Arts, National Council for Arts and Culture, and Herbert H. Lehman College. Salaam and Forces of Nature Dance Theatre were honored with a 2017 Bessie award for Outstanding Production for *DanceAfrica's* centerpiece performance, *Healing Sevens*. The company also received the 2013 Audelco Award for Dance Company of the Year. Salaam has served on the faculties of the American Dance Festival in the US and Seoul, Korea; Herbert H. Lehman College; The Ailey School; Restoration Youth Arts Academy; and Harlem Children's Zone. Inspired by Dr. Maulana Karenga, Salaam created Kwanzaa Regeneration Night Celebration in Harlem, now in its 37th year.

**Inganzo Ngari** was formed in 2006 with the purpose of promoting the Rwandan folkloric dance tradition among the country's youth. Since its formation, the troupe has gained widespread recognition among the Rwandan community. Inganzo Ngari, which translates as "wide talent," began performing internationally in 2009, winning Best Dance Group at the Festival of Folkloric Dance in Spain and showcasing its talents in South Africa, Turkey, Singapore, Russia, Nigeria, Gabon, and beyond.

An annual favorite and symbol of youth engagement in the preservation of African heritage, the **BAM/Restoration Dance Youth Ensemble** returns to BAM for the 21st year. Under the artistic direction of Karen Thornton, the gifted young dancers of RestorationART, artistic home to the largest community of African descent in the nation, celebrate both ancestral roots and present-day community. *The Village Voice* has praised these young dancers as "exuberant and disciplined" and "a group worth following."

The **DanceAfrica Spirit Walkers** were founded by Baba Abdel Salaam in 2016 to theatrically honor the ancestors of Africa and its diaspora at the annual DanceAfrica Memorial Tribute, originally developed by the late Baba Chuck Davis. The group comprises professional dance artists and musicians from the Restoration Arts Alumni, Asase Yaa, Harambee, and Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, melding contemporary, hip-hop, modern, and African vernacular forms.

**Malaika Uwamahoro** is a Rwandan-born actor, poet, and activist, and a recent graduate of Fordham University with a degree in theater studies. She has performed her poetry around the world, most recently at the United Nations for the commemoration of the Rwandan genocide. In 2013, she appeared in Katori Hall's *Our Lady of Kibeho* at the Signature Theatre. Other theater credits include *Cartography* (Kennedy Center), *Measure Back* (Dixon Place), and *Africa's Hope* (USC Bovard Theatre).

### **DanceAfrica Bazaar**

Each year, the free outdoor bazaar delights crowds with local and international vendors who transform the streets surrounding BAM into a marketplace of African, Caribbean, and African-American food, fashion, jewelry, and crafts. An estimated 40,000 people from all five boroughs of New York and the tri-state area sample these delights and bask in the communal atmosphere throughout the weekend. *The New York Times* called it "a colorful kickoff for the summer street festival season." The bazaar also features entertainment for families.

The bazaar takes place on May 25 from 12–10pm, and on May 26 & 27 from 12–8pm on Ashland Pl between Hanson Pl & Fulton St. Admission is free and hours are subject to change.

### **DanceAfrica Workshops**

Co-presented by BAM and Mark Morris Dance Group  
Location: Mark Morris Dance Center (3 Lafayette Ave)

May 27 at 10am: DanceAfrica Family Workshop (Prices vary, see BAM.org for details)

May 27 at 11:30am: DanceAfrica Inclusive Workshop for disabled and nondisabled adults \$12 (ages 16 and up)

May 27 at 12pm: DanceAfrica Master Class \$12

### **Late Night Dance Party**

Keep the DanceAfrica celebration going after hours with DJ YB, who brings a mix of afrobeat, funk, soul, rock, jazz, and hip-hop stylings to the dance floor of BAMcafé. Co-presented by OkayAfrica.

May 25 at 10pm

BAMcafé (30 Lafayette Ave)

### **DanceAfrica Portal**

For the first time, BAM is partnering with Shared\_Studios to bring the “Portal” to the outdoor bazaar. The DanceAfrica Portal is video-communicating space in which New Yorkers will meet Kigali-based Rwandans in real time and have conversations on a wide-range of topics, some curated, some spontaneous. The Portal will be staffed to facilitate dialogue and provides language interpretation if necessary.

May 25 from 11am to 4pm; 26 & 27 from 12 to 4pm.

Ashland Pl (between Hanson Pl & Fulton St)

### **RadioBook Rwanda**

BAM and Center for Fiction celebrate the work of RadioBook Rwanda in this discussion that explores the work of three young Rwandan fiction writers: Mutsinzi Eric, Annick La Reine Shimwa, and Jimmy Tuyiringire. Although different in style, their works share common themes: relationships, resistance, and modern myths. Three creative voices of different disciplines will read from the stories and address the larger themes through the lens of their own work and practice. A moderated conversation will follow along with questions from the audience. Copies of the three RadioBook Rwanda publications—otherwise not available in the US—will be available for purchase on site.

RadioBook Rwanda is a new multimedia literary imprint, showcasing Rwandan and East African creative voices. The imprint is the brainchild of three publishers: Huza Press (Rwanda), Kwani Trust (Kenya), and No Bindings (UK). It draws on inspiration and editorial expertise from Kwani Trust’s Kwanini series, while opening up new audiences for Rwandan writers published by Huza Press through No Bindings’ innovative approaches to form and community publishing.

May 26 at 12pm

The Center for Fiction (15 Lafayette Ave). Free.

### **Visual Arts**

**Innocent Nkurunziza** (b. 1986) is a Rwandan contemporary artist who lives and works in Kigali, Rwanda. Driven by a desire to change lives through art, Nkurunziza, along with his brother Emmanuel Nkuranga, founded Inema Arts Center in 2012. Nkurunziza is a prominent force in the development and promotion of the contemporary visual art scene in Rwanda, and continues to lead efforts to bring art from Rwanda to international audiences. He hopes to inspire viewers to live out their dreams just as he feels he is able to do every day working as an artist.

Nkurunziza is active in a painting, sculpture, mixed-media, and fashion and jewelry designing, employing an abstract style that is both highly expressive and methodical. He imbues his work with many, interlacing colors and textures that he derives from the people and landscapes that surround him. His latest abstract work, *Intense Emotions*, is a reflection of Nkurunziza's Rwanda.

May 10—31  
BAM Fisher Lower Lobby (321 Ashland Pl)

### **FilmAfrica**

This cinematic companion to the annual DanceAfrica celebration showcases the best new narrative, documentary, and short films from across Africa and the diaspora, with a special focus on films from and about Rwanda.

#### ***Sew the Winter to My Skin* (2018)**

Dir. Jahmil X.T. Qubeka. With Ezra Mabengeza, Peter Kurth, Kandyse McClure.

Told with the visual grandeur of a classic Western, this senses-stunning epic recounts the life and legend of John Kepe, a Robin Hood-esque bandit who achieved folk hero status among black South Africans by robbing and outwitting colonizers in the 1950s. Forgoing dialogue in favor of dense, expressionistic sound design, *Sew the Winter to My Skin* is "a visionary work...[that] rewards patient viewers with its sensory riches and hypnotic rhythms" (*The Hollywood Reporter*).

May 23 at 7pm

#### ***Finding Hillywood* (2013)**

Dirs. Leah Warshawski & Christopher Towey.

This moving documentary chronicles the birth of Rwanda's burgeoning film industry (nicknamed Hillywood after the country's terrain) as a generation of artists turn to filmmaking as a means of processing their country's painful past. Their quest to build a truly Rwandan cinema—films made by, for, and about Rwandans—is a powerful testament to art's capacity to heal. +

#### ***Imfura* (2018)**

Dir. Samuel Ishimwe.

Winner of the Silver Bear for Best Short Film at the 2018 Berlinale, this incantatory memory piece traces the journey of a young man who travels back to the home of his mother who disappeared during the Rwandan genocide.

May 24 at 4:30pm and May 25 at 1:30pm

#### ***Dreamstates* (2016)**

Dir. Anisia Uzeyman. With Saul Williams, Anisia Uzeyman, Beau Sia.

The debut feature from Rwandan filmmaker Anisia Uzeyman is a mesmerizing tour through the Afropunk underground in which a pair of artists (played by the director and her real-life husband, hip-hop poet Saul Williams) fall in love while traveling the United States. Shot entirely on iPhones in a hallucinatory haze of color-saturated images, the aptly titled *Dreamstates* is an otherworldly vision of America as seen through the eyes of an outsider.

May 25 at 7pm

***Intore*** (2014)

Dir. Eric Kabera.

This stirring documentary is an inspiring look at how Rwanda is overcoming its tragic history by reclaiming its identity through music, dance, and the resilience of a new generation.

Interweaving rousing performances with poignant interviews with genocide survivors and perpetrators alike, *Intore* offers a hopeful vision of a new era in Rwandan history built on peace and unity. +

***A Place for Myself*** (2016) Dir. Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo.

A sensitive portrait of a young Rwandan girl with albinism learning to accept herself.

May 24 at 7pm

***Sometimes in April*** (2005) Dir. Raoul Peck. With Idris Elba, Oris Erhuero, Carole Karemera. Raoul Peck (*I Am Not Your Negro*) offers a soul-shaking account of the Rwandan genocide as seen through the eyes of a Hutu man (played by Idris Elba in a shattering performance) fighting to save his Tutsi wife and children as the unstoppable tide of violence encroaches. Steadfastly refusing to sentimentalize or sugarcoat any aspects of the story, Peck dares us to look away, making an almost unimaginable tragedy viscerally and unforgettably real.

May 25 at 4pm

***Ouaga Girls*** (2017) Dir. Theresa Traoré Dahlberg.

In Burkina Faso's capital Ouagadougou, a group of proudly independent young women find a sense of belonging, joy, and sisterhood as they study to become car mechanics and face—with a mix of determined optimism and trepidation—the looming responsibilities of adulthood.

Pulsing with the humor and humanity of its subjects, this heartfelt documentary offers a vital look at the issues facing women in a rapidly changing Burkina Faso.

May 24 at 9:30pm

***The Fruitless Tree*** (2016)

Dir. Aïcha Macky.

Aïcha Macky's fearlessly personal documentary breaks the silence on a taboo topic in Nigerian society: the ostracism faced by married women who don't or can't have children. Speaking out about her own struggles with infertility—which in Nigeria is always attributed to women, never men—Macky works to shatter the stigma surrounding childlessness and offer hope to other women suffering in silence.

May 25 at 9:15pm & May 27 at 2pm

***Mossane*** (1996)

Dir. Safi Faye. With Magou Seck, Alioune Konaré, Isseu Niang.

A 14-year-old girl finds herself caught between tradition and her own heart when she rejects the marriage her family has arranged for her. The stunning last film to date from pioneering Senegalese director Safi Faye reflects her work as an ethnologist, marrying a sensitively observed portrait of rural Senegalese life with a powerful drama that speaks to the experiences of young women coming of age in a changing society.

May 26 at 4pm

***Borders*** (2017)

Dir. Apolline Traoré. With Amelie Mbaye, Naky Sy Savane, Adizelou Sidi.

On a bus en route from Dakar, Senegal, to Lagos, Nigeria, four resourceful women must band together as they navigate the risks that come with traveling alone while female, fighting back

against threats of violence, sexual harassment, and government corruption at each border crossing. This slice-of-life drama from Burkinabe director Apolline Traoré pays tribute to the bravery of West African women asserting their independence in a patriarchal society.  
May 26 at 7pm & May 27 at 7:30pm

***Supa Modo*** (2018)

Dir. Likarion Wainaina. With Stycie Waweru, Marianne Nungo, Nyawara Ndambia.  
A new superhero takes flight in this heartfelt ode to the power of imagination. Jo is a nine-year-old, terminally ill Kenyan girl whose ultimate dream—to be a superhero like the ones in the movies she loves—captivates and inspires her entire community. Touching on serious themes with humor and humanity, *Supa Modo* is a hugely touching tribute to the bravery and resilience of children in the face of adversity.  
May 26 at 2pm

***Wallay*** (2016) Dir. Berni Goldblat. With Makan Nathan Diarra, Ibrahim Koma, Hamadoun Kassogué.

A rebellious 13-year-old boy gets a serious case of culture shock when he's sent from his home in France to live with his uncle in Burkina Faso for a summer. Filmed with a relaxed, documentary like naturalism, this charming coming-of-age saga, the debut feature from Swiss-Burkinabe director Berni Goldblat, is a tender, perceptive look at cross-cultural awakening and reconnecting with one's roots.  
May 27 at 3:30pm

**Shorts Program**

***Visions*** (2017) Dir. Surreal 16 (Abba T. Makama, Michael Gouken Omonua & C.J. "Fiery" Obasi).

Comprising three shorts inspired by dreams and visions, this anthology work from Nigeria's Surreal 16 collective—a group of young filmmakers devoted to genre-defying experimentation—explores a young woman's identity, relationship, and spirituality.

***Mr. Gele: The Man. The Story. The Craft*** (2016)

Dir. Gladys Eleh.

A lively documentary portrait of Segun Gele, a renowned designer of the colorful, elaborately styled Nigerian head wraps known as gele.

***Birth of Afrobeat*** (2017)

Dir. Opiyo Okeyo.

In this live action-animation hybrid, legendary drummer Tony Allen recounts how he and his partner Fela Kuti created the Afrobeat genre in Lagos, Nigeria.

***Urumuli*** (2018)

Dir. Abdoul Mujyambere.

A meditative study of light and movement by Rwandan artist and choreographer Abdoul Mujyambere.

***dancedance/ReVolution*** (2017)

Dir. Mark Freeman.

This arresting overview of contemporary dance in South Africa showcases the work of innovative choreographers for whom movement becomes a powerful tool with which to address politics, history, race, and gender.

***Entitled*** (2018)

Dir. Adeyemi Michael.

What does the immigrant fantasy feel like? Director Adeyemi Michael reimagines his mother's idea of moving from Nigeria to London in this dreamlike short about leaving your country of origin.

May 26 at 9:15pm and May 27 at 5:45pm

**BAM Rose Cinemas** (30 Lafayette Ave)

Tickets: \$15 per screening for adults; \$11 (seniors & veterans); \$7.50 (members levels 1-3); free (members levels 4 & above)

Tickets available starting April 19, by phone at 718.777.FILM or by visiting [BAM.org](http://BAM.org)

FilmAfrica press contact: Shelley Farmer, [sfarmer@BAM.org](mailto:sfarmer@BAM.org) or 718.724.8023.

Credits

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General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place (between Lafayette Ave and Hanson Place), houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas features first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming.



Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater) D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue  
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center  
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit [BAM.org](http://BAM.org).

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